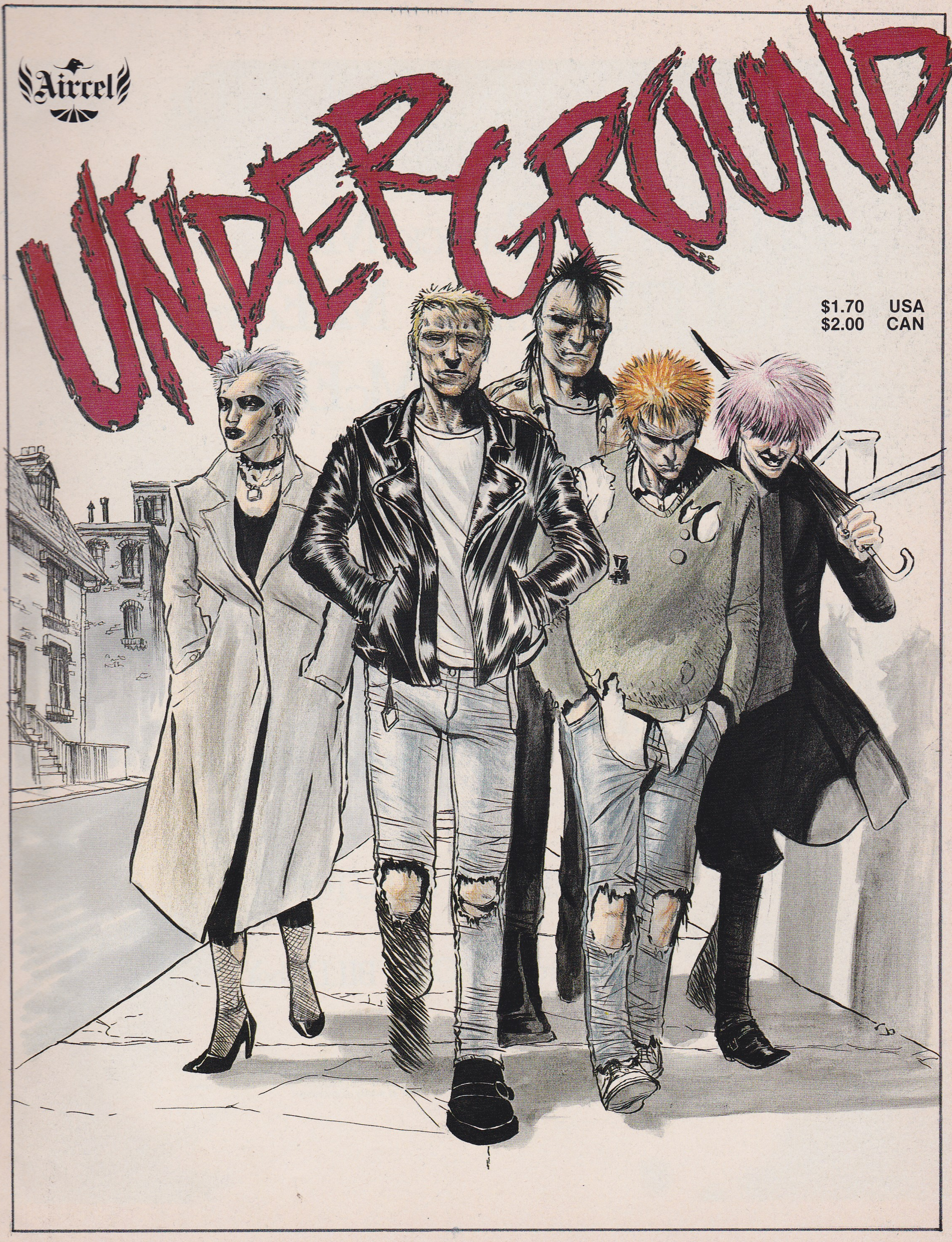
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:UNDERGROUND:

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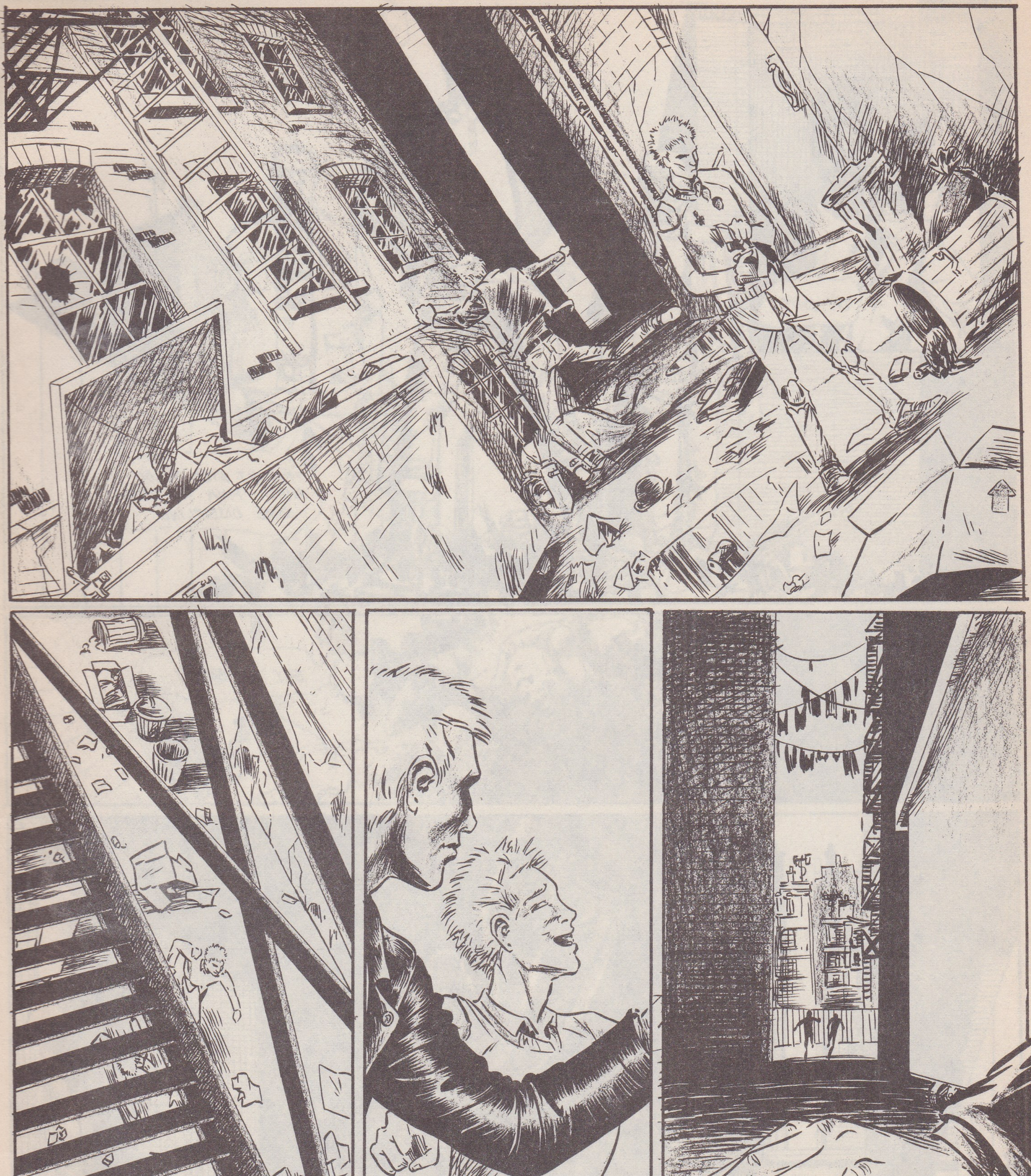
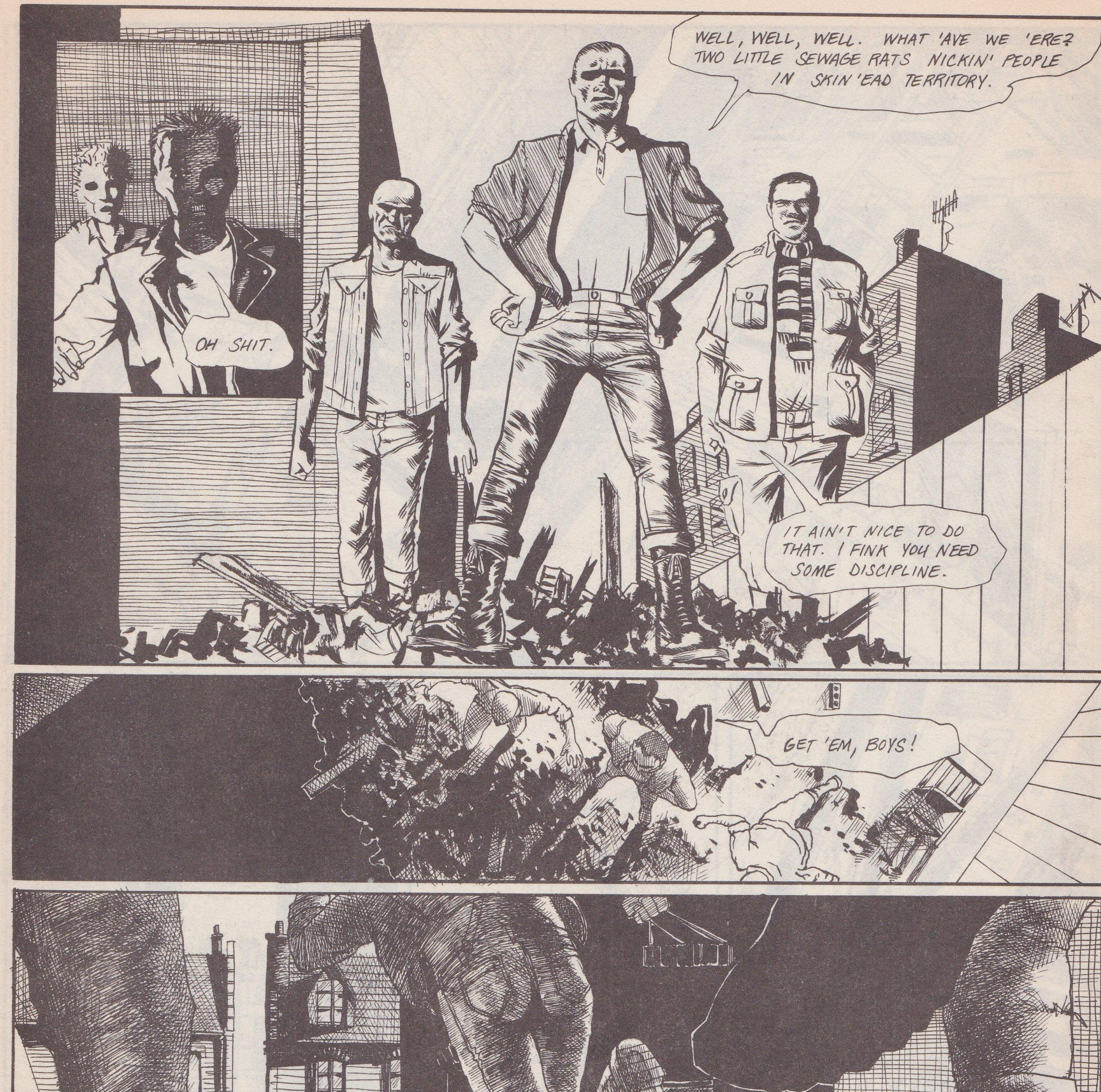
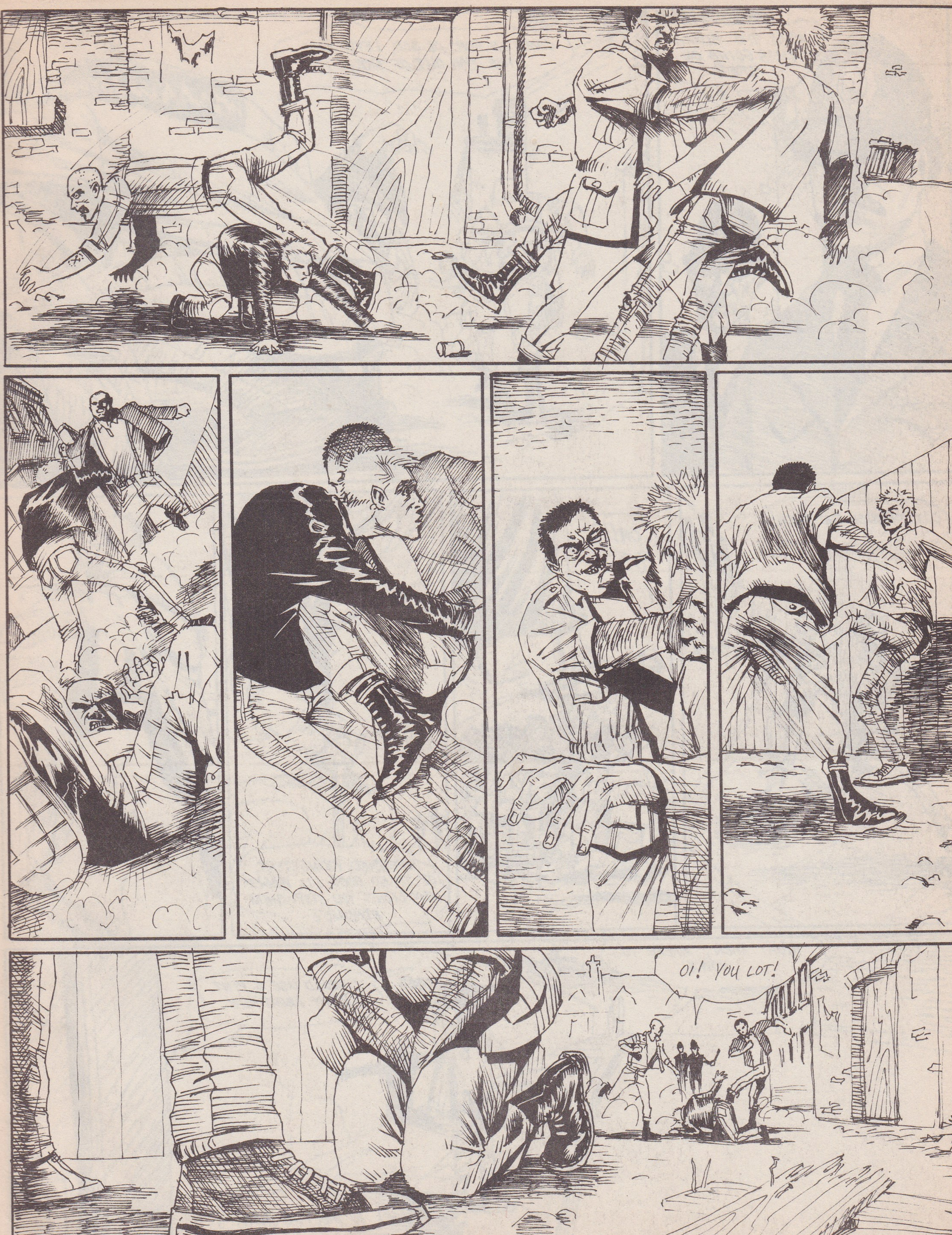


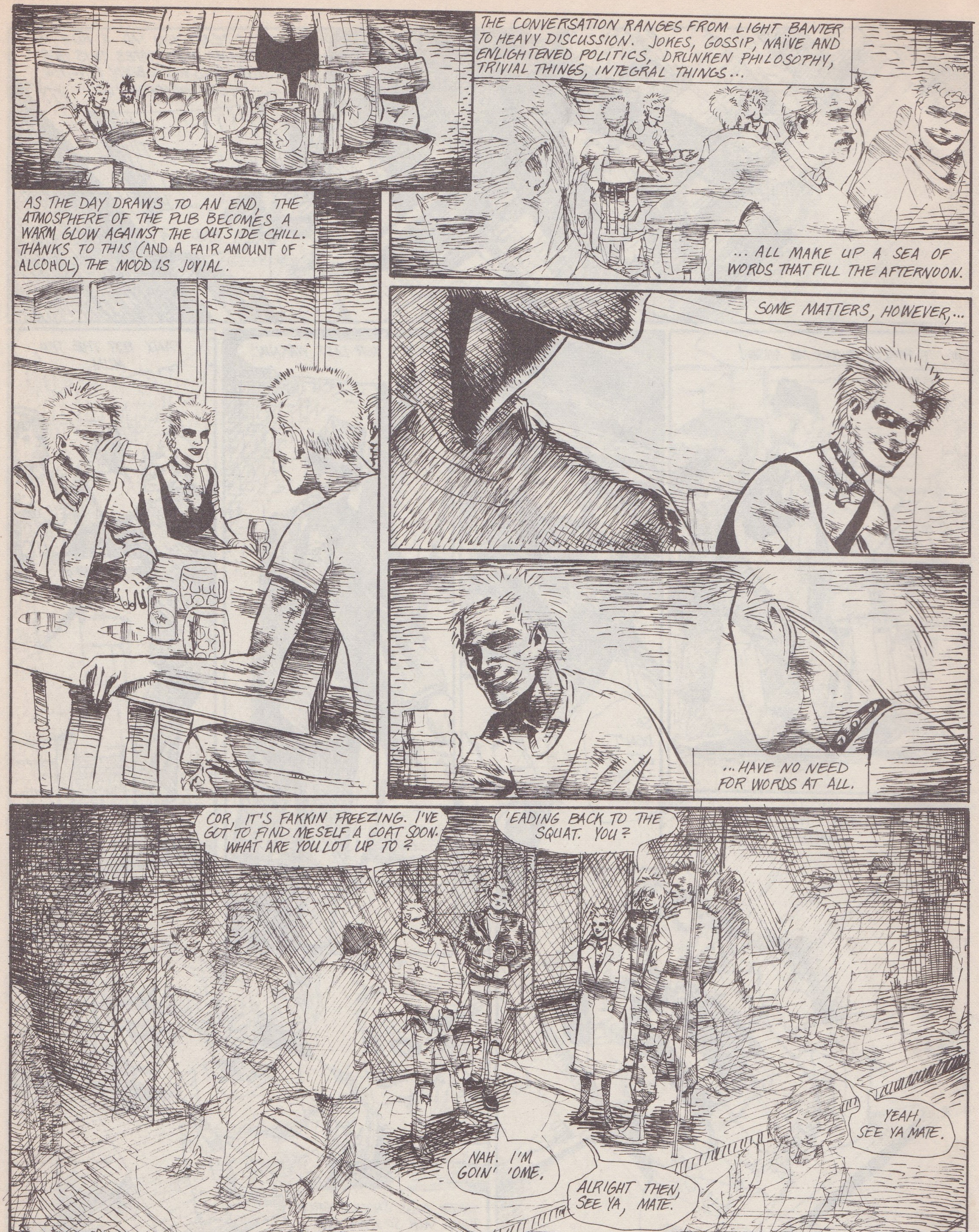

WELL, WELL, WELL. WHAT 'AVE WE 'ERE? TWO LITTLE SEWAGE RATS NICKIN' PEOPLE IN SKIN'EAD TERRITORY.
OH SHIT.
IT AIN'T NICE TO DO THAT. I FINK YOU NEED SOME DISCIPLINE.
GET 'EM, BOYS!


OI! YOU LOT!

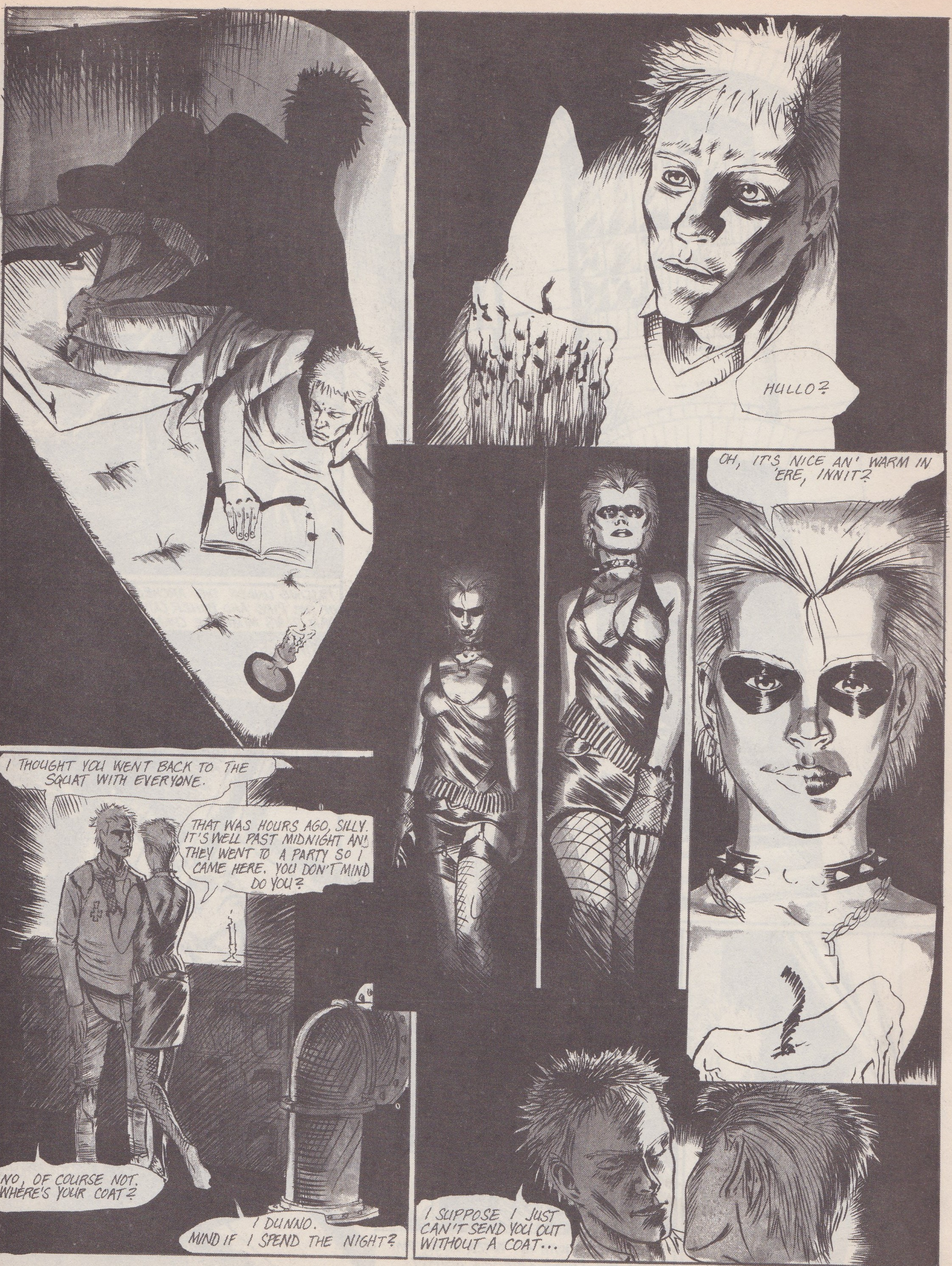
WHAT THE BLOODY 'ELL'S GOING ON 'ERE?
COME ON ROR' OL SOD, LET'S GET THE FAK OUT OF 'ERE!
CUT THROUGH THE PARK!
OH!!
WRETCHED YOUNGSTERS, UP TO NO GOOD I'LL WAGER. WHY DIDN'T YOU STOP THEM, EDMUND?
RIGHT THEN, WHERE TO NOW?
I COULD USE A PINT RIGHT ABOUT NOW.
TO THE PUB THEN.

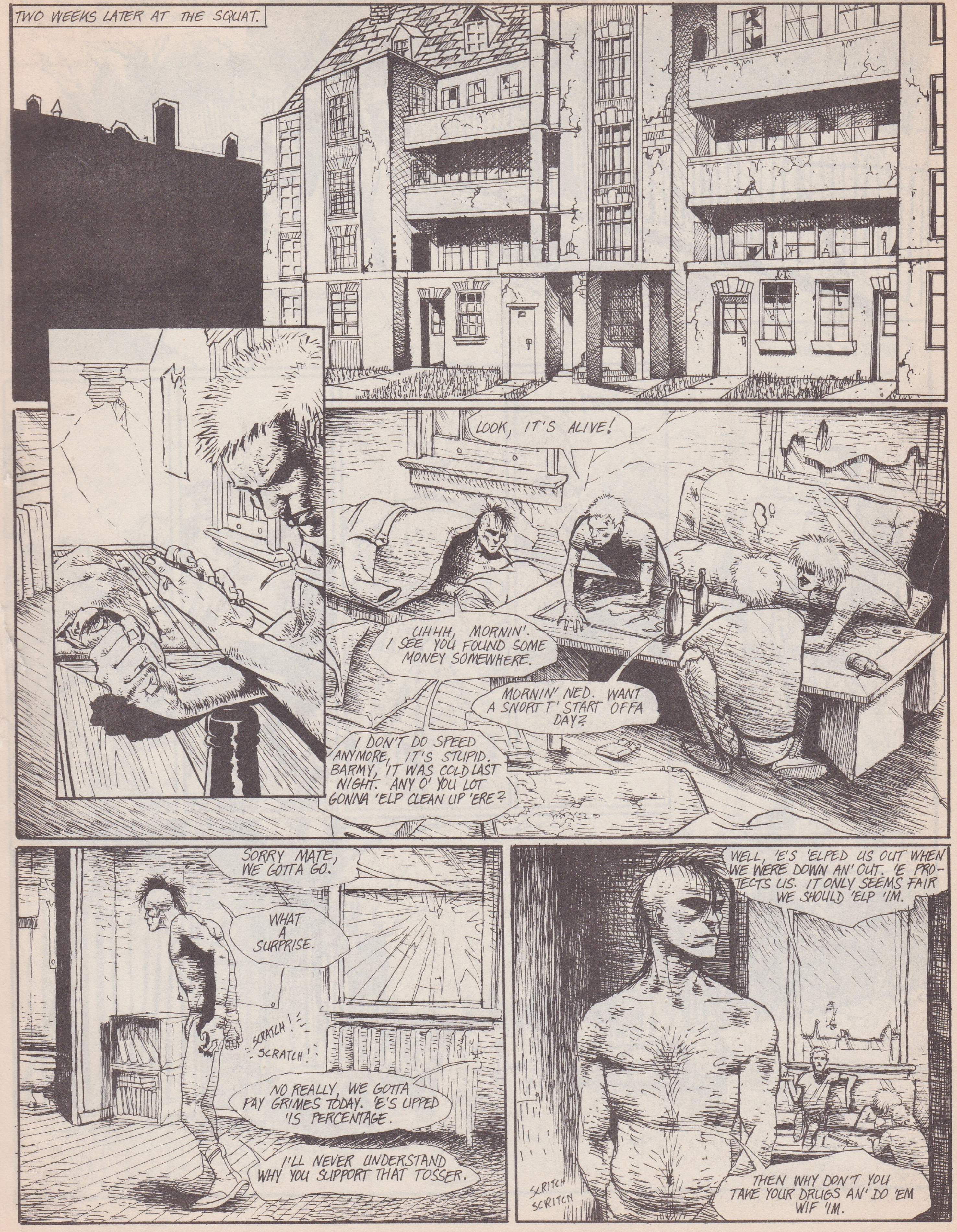
SO SHE TAKES IT AND RUNS, AN' 'E'S STANDIN' THERE WIF 'IS DRAWERS 'ROUND 'IS ANKLES.
WHAT A PRAT.
LET'S SIT IN THE BACK...
I S'POSE THIS IS TO CELEBRATE OUR GREAT ESCAPE.
HULLO, LADS. WHAT'LL IT BE?
TWO PINTS OF GUINESS, LUV.
HI, HI, HI. IF IT ISN'T 'SCRATCH AN' RORY.
HULLO CHAS. WHAT CAN WE DO FOR YOU?

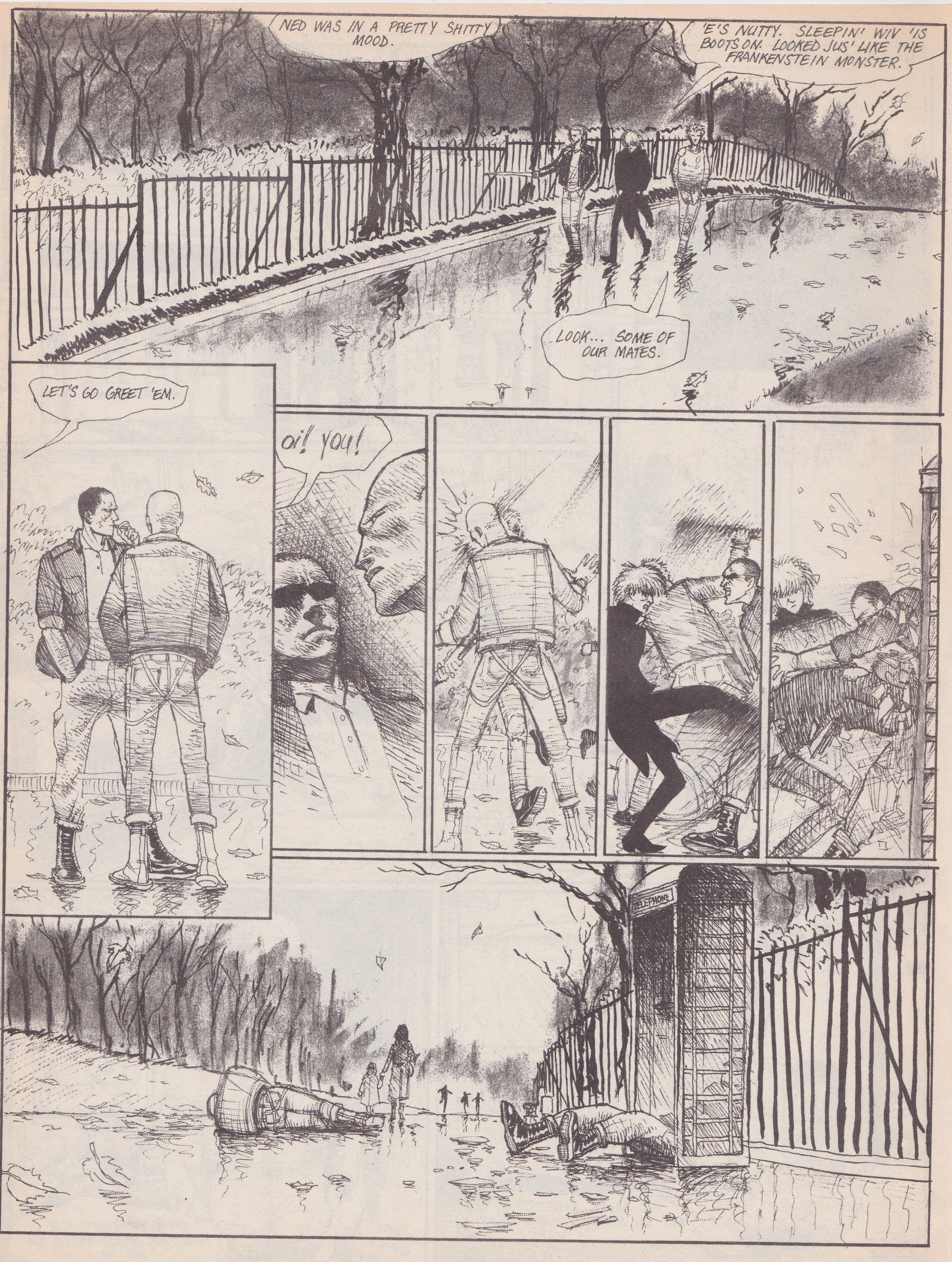
WELL I 'EAR YOU 'AD A RUN IN WIF SUMMA ME MATES THIS MORNIN'. THEY SAID YOU'D BEEN PINCHIN' IN OUR NEIGHBOR'OOD.
AND...?
AN' IT REALLY BURNS ME ARSE!
SO... DON'T LET IT 'APPEN AGAIN.
THAT'S YER LAST WARNIN!
FANX FER THE TEA, MUM.
OI, WHAT WAS 'E ON ABOUT?
THE USUAL.
THOSE LADS SHOULD GROW THEIR 'AIR SO THEY 'AVE SOMETHING NEW TO TALK ABOUT.

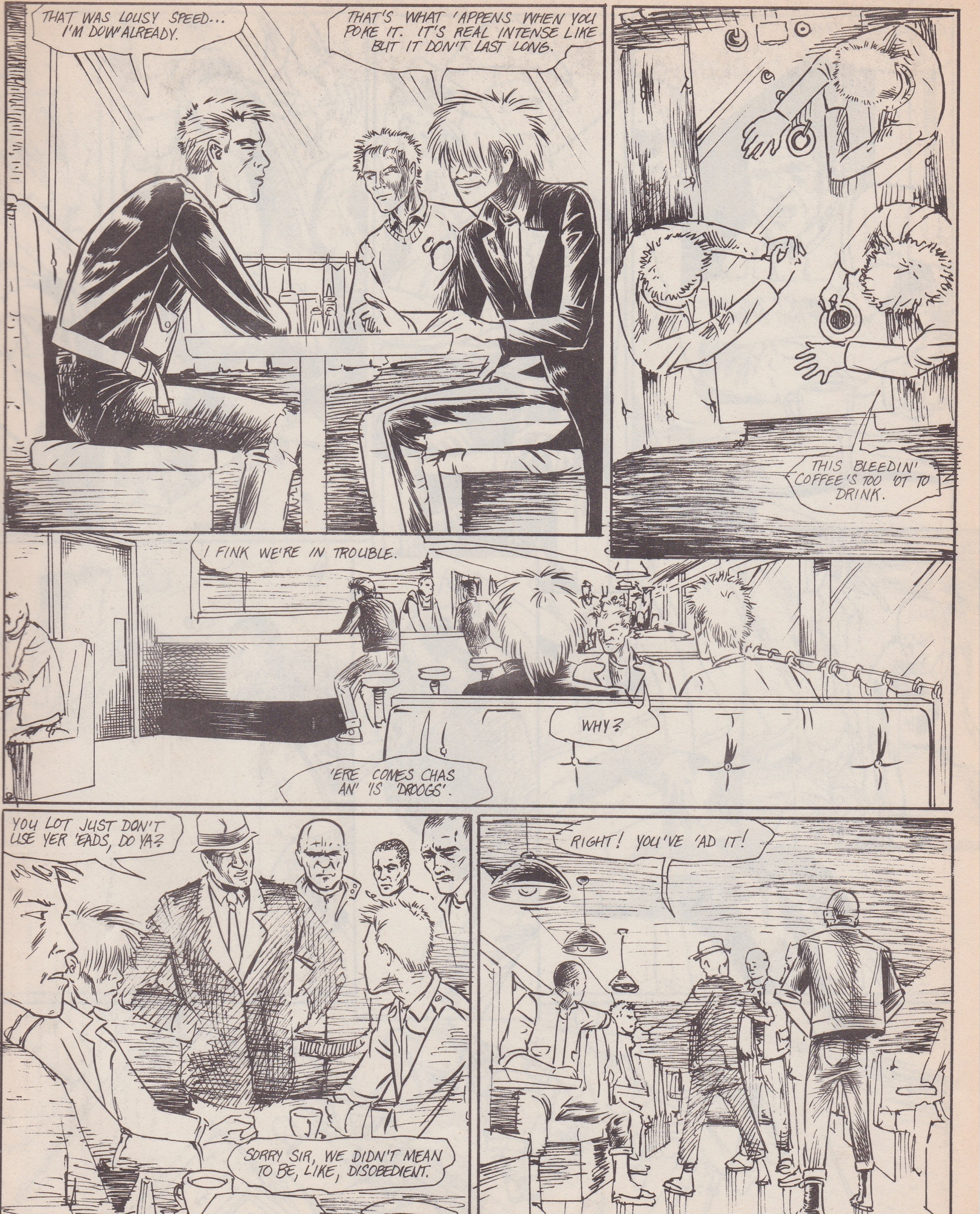

THE CONVERSATION RANGES FROM LIGHT BANTER TO HEAVY DISCUSSION. JOKES, GOSSIP, NAÏVE AND ENLIGHTENED POLITICS, DRUNKEN PHILOSOPHY, TRIVIAL THINGS, INTEGRAL THINGS...
AS THE DAY DRAWS TO AN END, THE ATMOSPHERE OF THE PUB BECOMES A WARM GLOW AGAINST THE OUTSIDE CHILL. THANKS TO THIS (AND A FAIR AMOUNT OF ALCOHOL) THE MOOD IS JOVIAL.
... ALL MAKE UP A SEA OF WORDS THAT FILL THE AFTERNOON.
SOME MATTERS, HOWEVER,...
...HAVE NO NEED FOR WORDS AT ALL.
COR, IT'S FAKKIN FREEZING. I'VE GOT TO FIND MESELF A COAT SOON. WHAT ARE YOU LOT UP TO ?
'EADING BACK TO THE SQUAT. YOU ?
NAH. I'M GOIN' 'OME.
ALRIGHT THEN, SEE YA, MATE.
YEAH, SEE YA MATE.

SCRATCH MAKES HIS WAY THROUGH THE RUINS OF THE OLD WAREHOUSE.
PASSING UNDER THE ARCHES OF THE PIPE AND BOILER CATHE-DRAL TO HIS MINIATURE CHAMBER.
FILLED AS IT IS WITH HOT WATER PIPES THAT SUPPLY THE PUBLIC LAVATORY NEARBY.

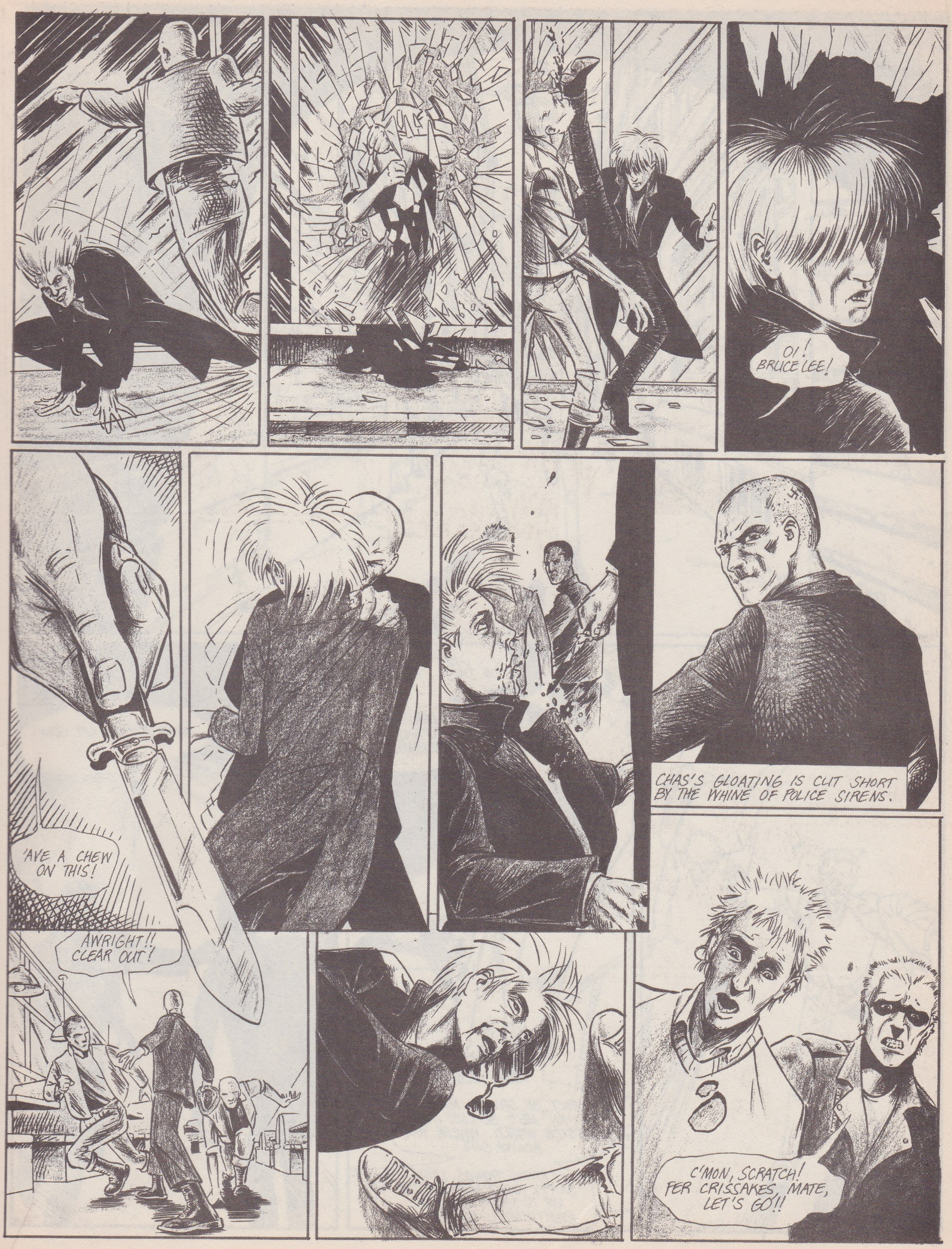

HULLO?
OH, IT'S NICE AN' WARM IN 'ERE, INNIT?
I THOUGHT YOU WENT BACK TO THE SQUAT WITH EVERYONE.
THAT WAS HOURS AGO, SILLY. IT'S WELL PAST MIDNIGHT AN' THEY WENT TO A PARTY SO I CAME HERE. YOU DON'T MIND DO YOU?
NO, OF COURSE NOT. WHERE'S YOUR COAT?
I DUNNO. MIND IF I SPEND THE NIGHT?
I SUPPOSE I JUST CAN'T SEND YOU OUT WITHOUT A COAT...


TWO WEEKS LATER AT THE SQUAT.
LOOK, IT'S ALIVE!
UHHH, MORNIN'. I SEE YOU FOUND SOME MONEY SOMEWHERE.
MORNIN' NED. WANT A SNORT T' START OFFA DAY?
I DON'T DO SPEED ANYMORE, IT'S STUPID. BARMY, IT WAS COLD LAST NIGHT. ANY O' YOU LOT GONNA 'ELP CLEAN UP 'ERE?
SORRY MATE, WE GOTTA GO.
WHAT A SURPRISE.
SCRATCH! SCRATCH!
NO REALLY, WE GOTTA PAY GRIMES TODAY. 'E'S UPPED 'IS PERCENTAGE.
I'LL NEVER UNDERSTAND WHY YOU SUPPORT THAT TOSSER.
WELL, 'E'S 'ELPED US OUT WHEN WE WERE DOWN AN' OUT. 'E PROTECTS US. IT ONLY SEEMS FAIR WE SHOULD 'ELP 'IM.
SCRITCH SCRITCH
THEN WHY DON'T YOU TAKE YOUR DRUGS AN' DO 'EM WIF 'IM.

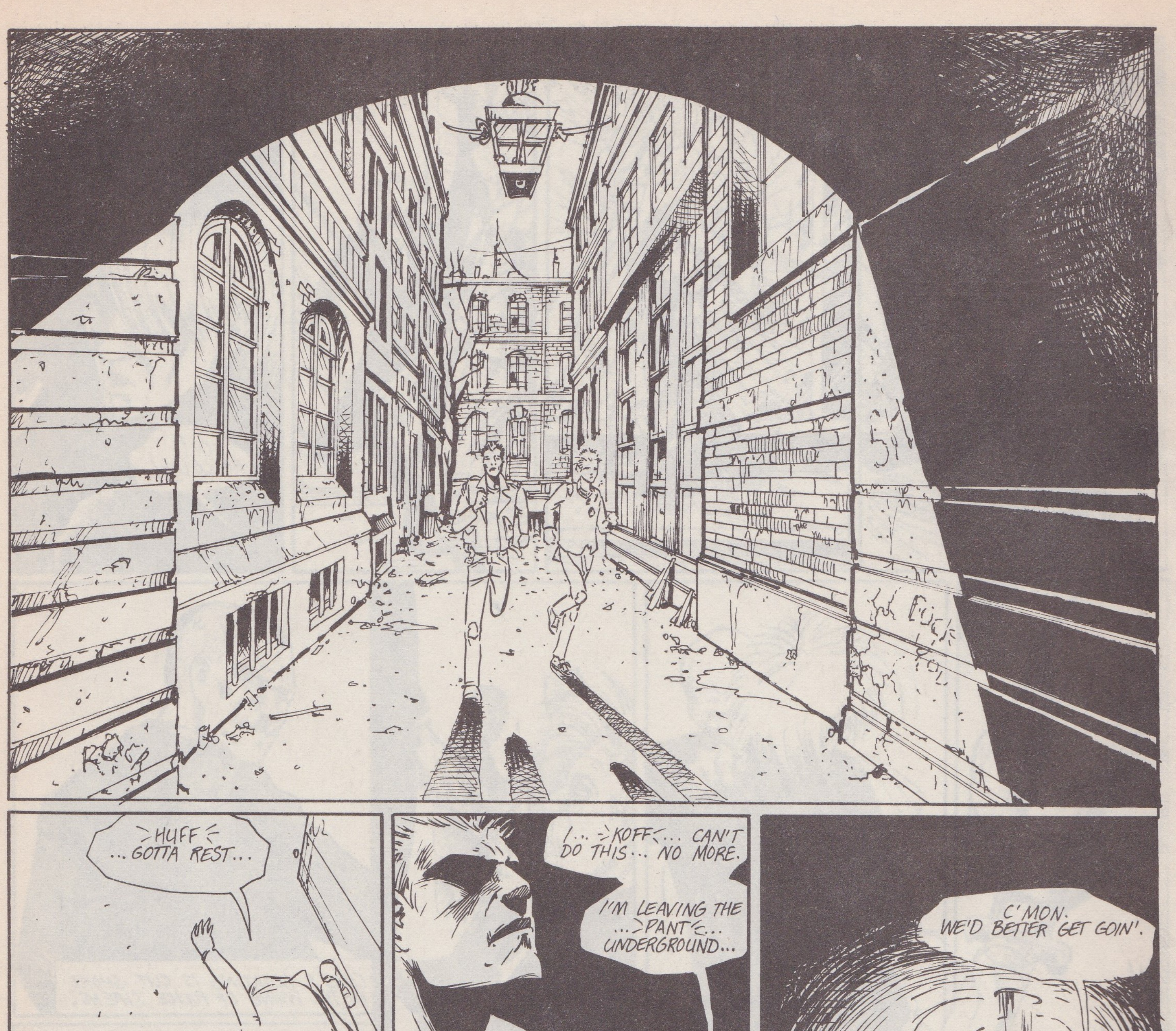

NED WAS IN A PRETTY SHITTY MOOD.
'E'S NUTTY. SLEEPIN' WIV 'IS BOOTS ON. LOOKED JUS' LIKE THE FRANKENSTEIN MONSTER.
LOOK... SOME OF OUR MATES.
LET'S GO GREET 'EM.
oi! you!
TELEPHONE


THAT WAS LOUSY SPEED... I'M DOWN ALREADY.
THAT'S WHAT 'APPENS WHEN YOU POKE IT. IT'S REAL INTENSE LIKE BUT IT DON'T LAST LONG.
THIS BLEEDIN' COFFEE'S TOO 'OT TO DRINK.
I FINK WE'RE IN TROUBLE.
WHY?
'ERE COMES CHAS AN' 'IS 'DROOGS'.
YOU LOT JUST DON'T USE YER 'EADS, DO YA?
SORRY SIR, WE DIDN'T MEAN TO BE, LIKE, DISOBEDIENT.
RIGHT! YOU'VE 'AD IT!

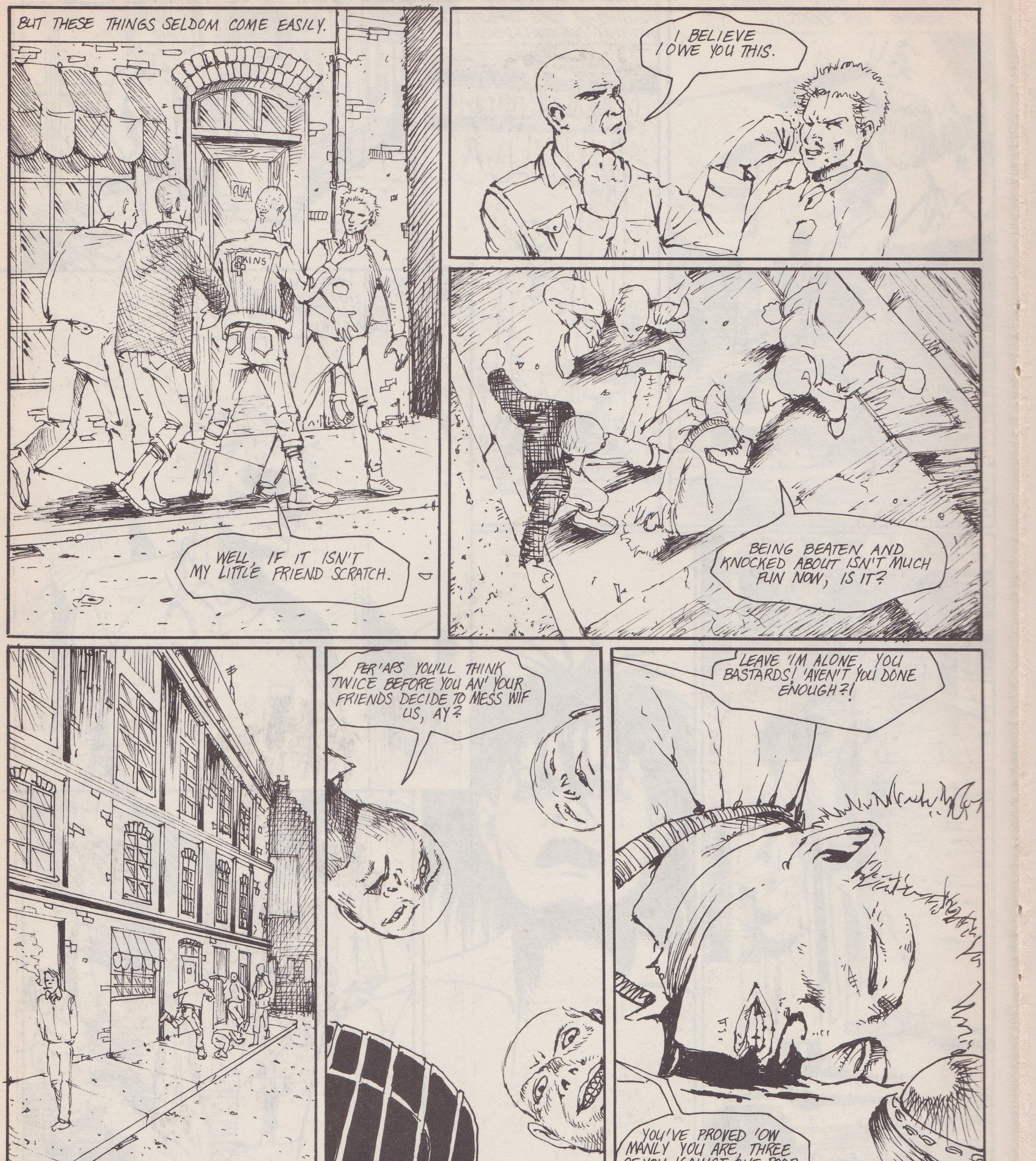
OI, YOU LOT! TAKE IT OUTSIDE!
MUM
I WON'T 'AVE NONE OF THAT IN 'ERE!
YEAH!

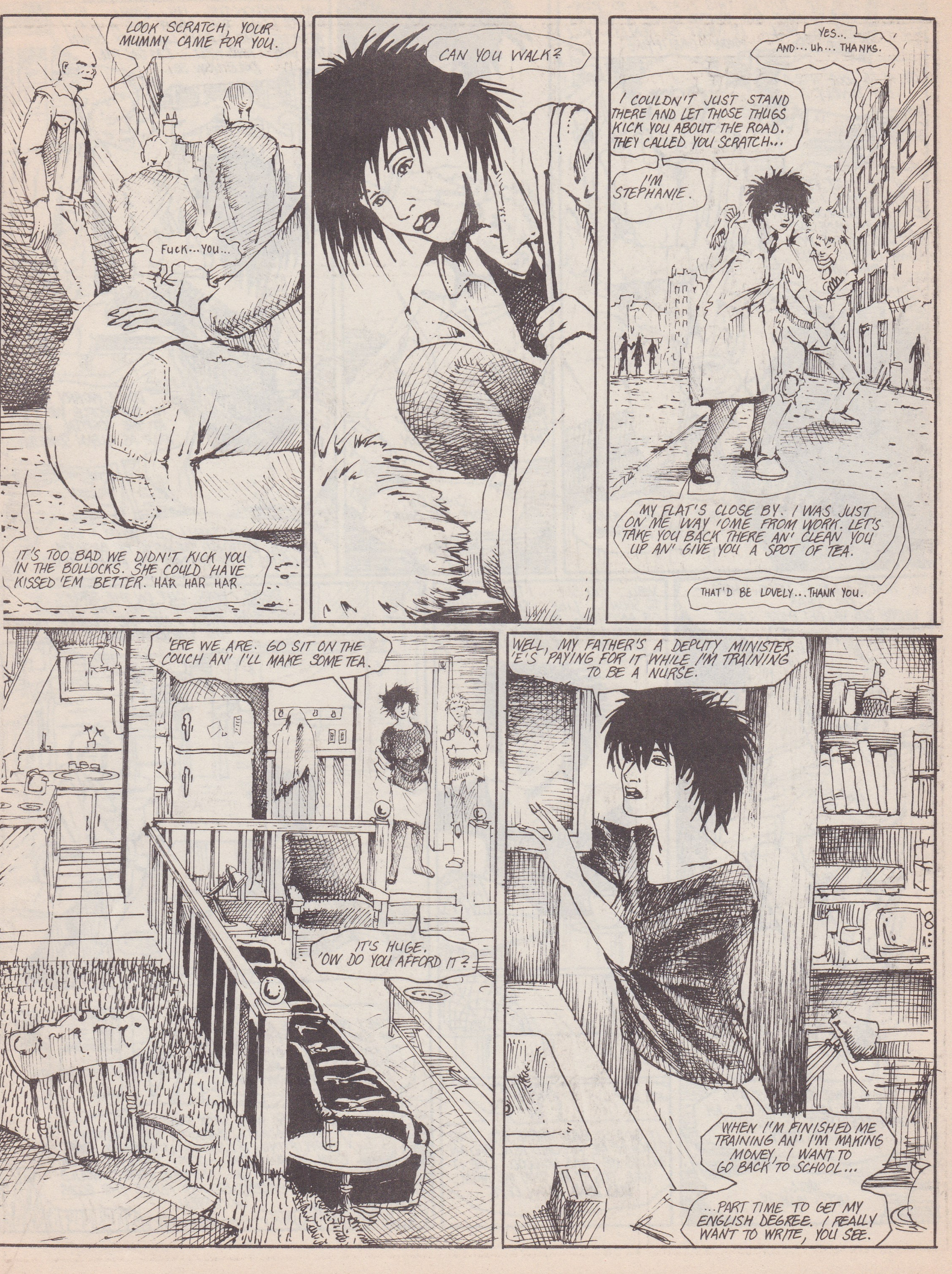


OI! BRUCE LEE!
'AVE A CHEW ON THIS!
CHAS'S GLOATING IS CUT SHORT BY THE WHINE OF POLICE SIRENS.
AWRIGHT!! CLEAR OUT!
C'MON, SCRATCH! FER CRISSAKES, MATE, LET'S GO!!

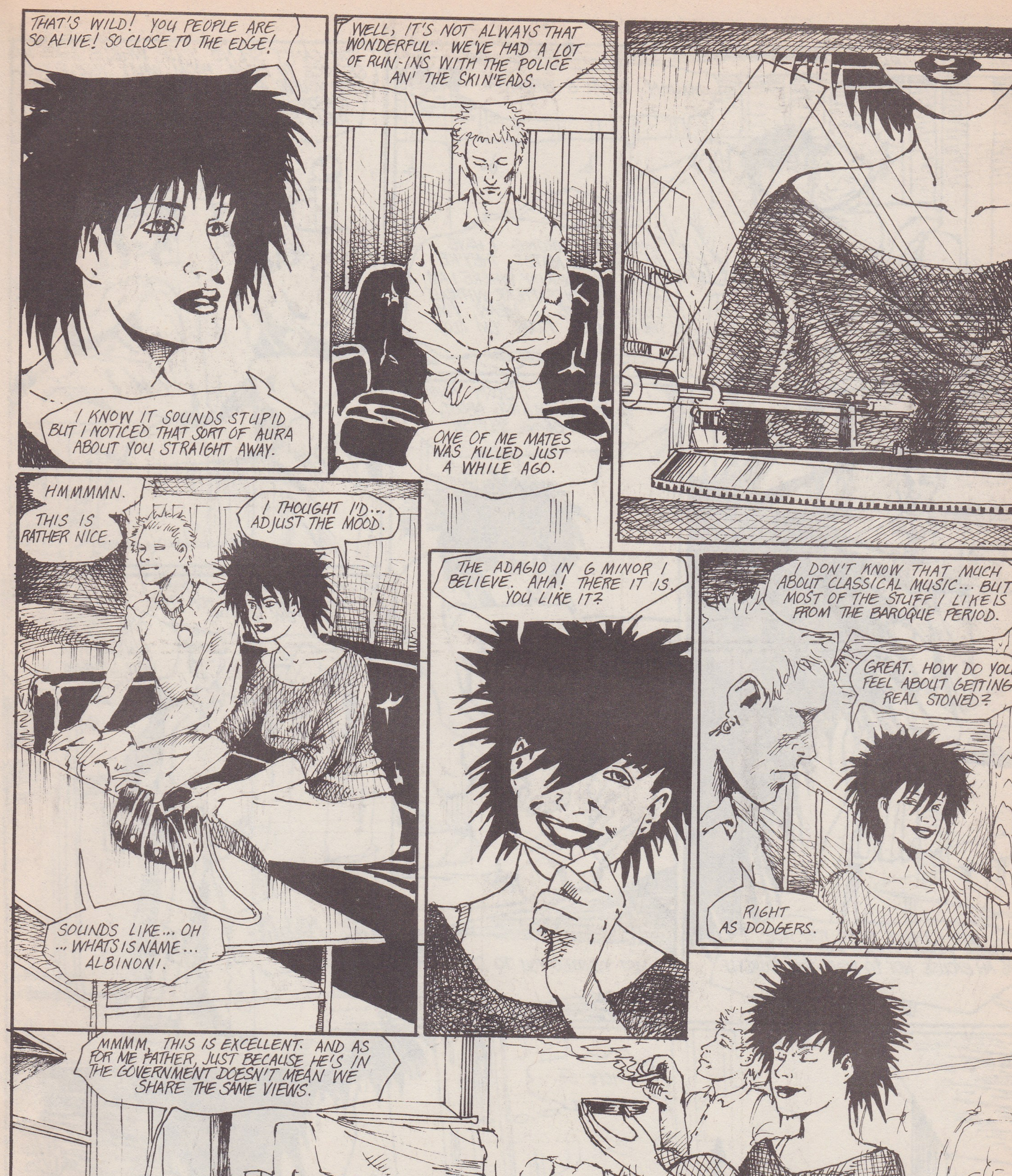

HUFF ... GOTTA REST...
RIGHT.
I... KOFF... CAN'T DO THIS... NO MORE.
I'M LEAVING THE ...PANT... UNDERGROUND...
DON'T BE STUPID, MATE. YOU AN' ME'D BE LOST INNA OUTSIDE WORLD. WHERE YOU GONNA GO?
I KNOW THINGS LOOK SHITTY RIGHT NOW, BUT TRY NOT TO THINK ABOUT IT. EVERYTHING'LL BE AWRIGHT.
C'MON. WE'D BETTER GET GOIN'.

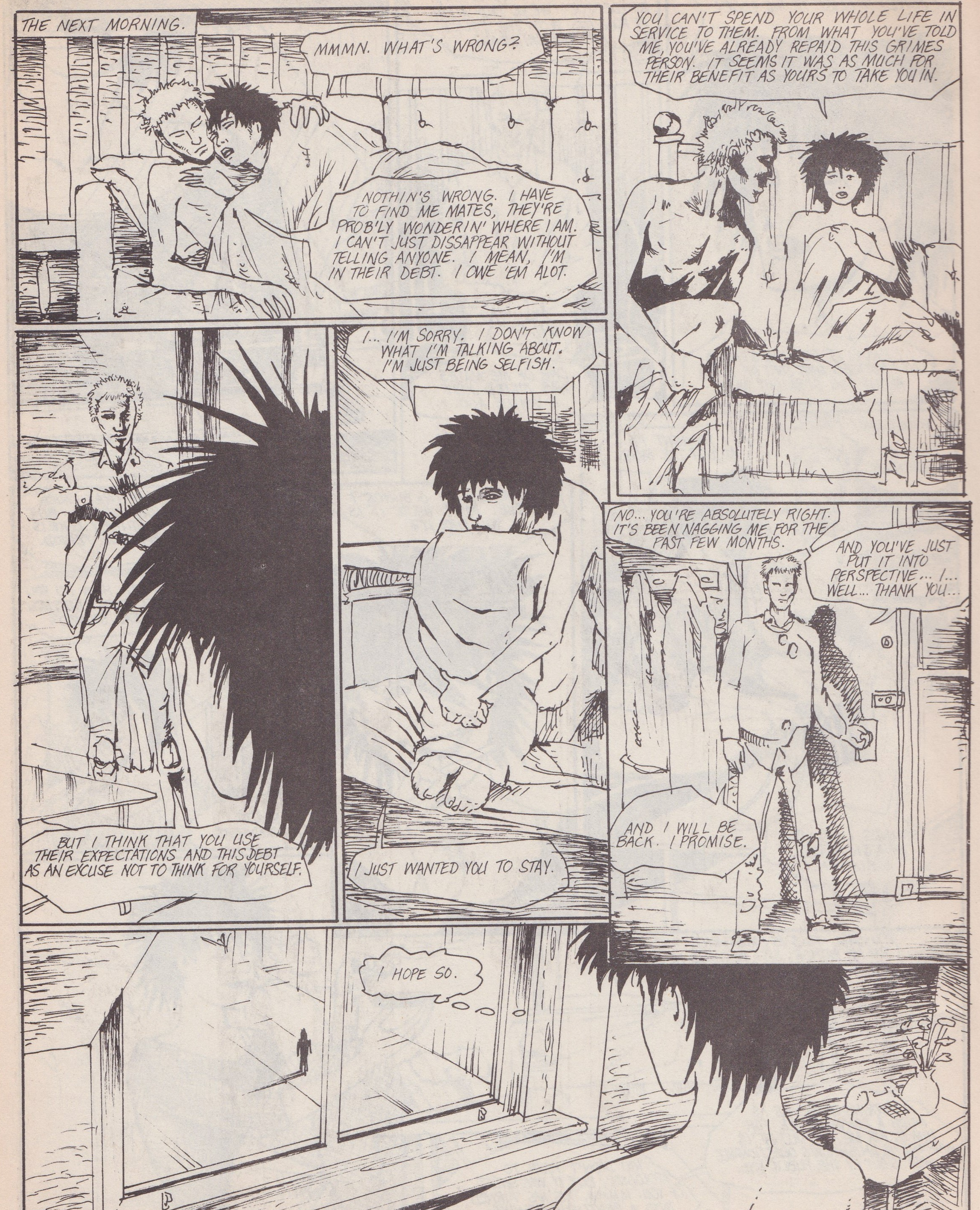
WEEKS PASS IN A BLUR, TURNING INTO MONTHS. FOR SCRATCH...
...LIFE IS AN ENDLESS ROUTINE HE GOES THROUGH WITHOUT ACKNOWLEDGING.
HE WANDERS THROUGH IT ALL, IGNORANTLY, LISTLESSLY, APATHETICALLY. TRULY UNSTIMULATED AND UNINSPIRED.
SOMETIMES IT TAKES VERY LITTLE TO TURN SUCH A STATE RIGHT 'ROUND.
A BEAUTIFUL FACE ONCE GLIMPSED IN A CROWD, PERHAPS.

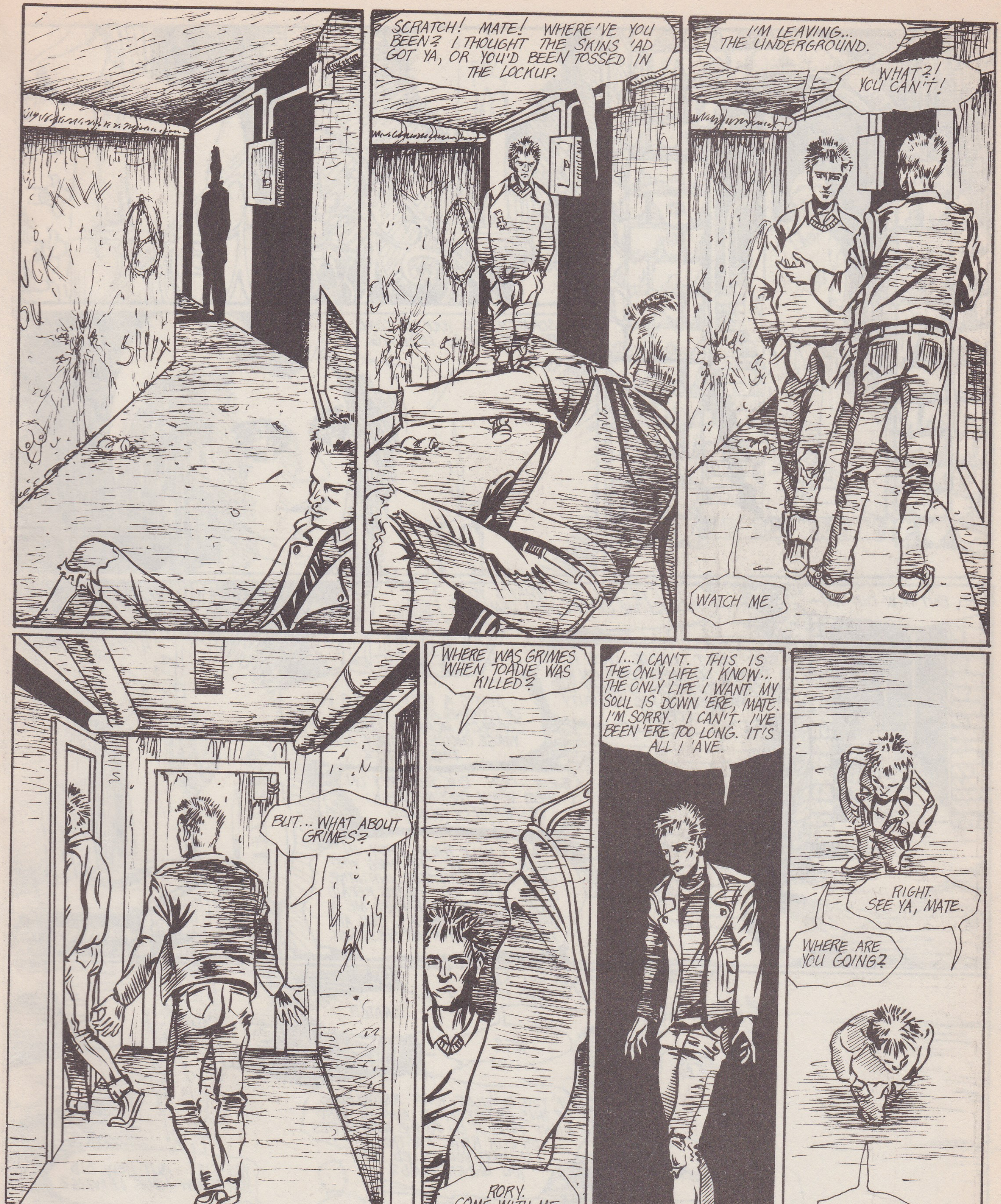

BUT THESE THINGS SELDOM COME EASILY.
WELL, IF IT ISN'T MY LITTLE FRIEND SCRATCH.
I BELIEVE I OWE YOU THIS.
BEING BEATEN AND KNOCKED ABOUT ISN'T MUCH FUN NOW, IS IT?
PER'APS YOU'LL THINK TWICE BEFORE YOU AN' YOUR FRIENDS DECIDE TO MESS WIF US, AY?
LEAVE 'IM ALONE, YOU BASTARDS! 'AVEN'T YOU DONE ENOUGH?!
YOU'VE PROVED 'OW MANLY YOU ARE, THREE OF YOU 'GAINST ONE POOR SOD.
SHOVE OFF!!

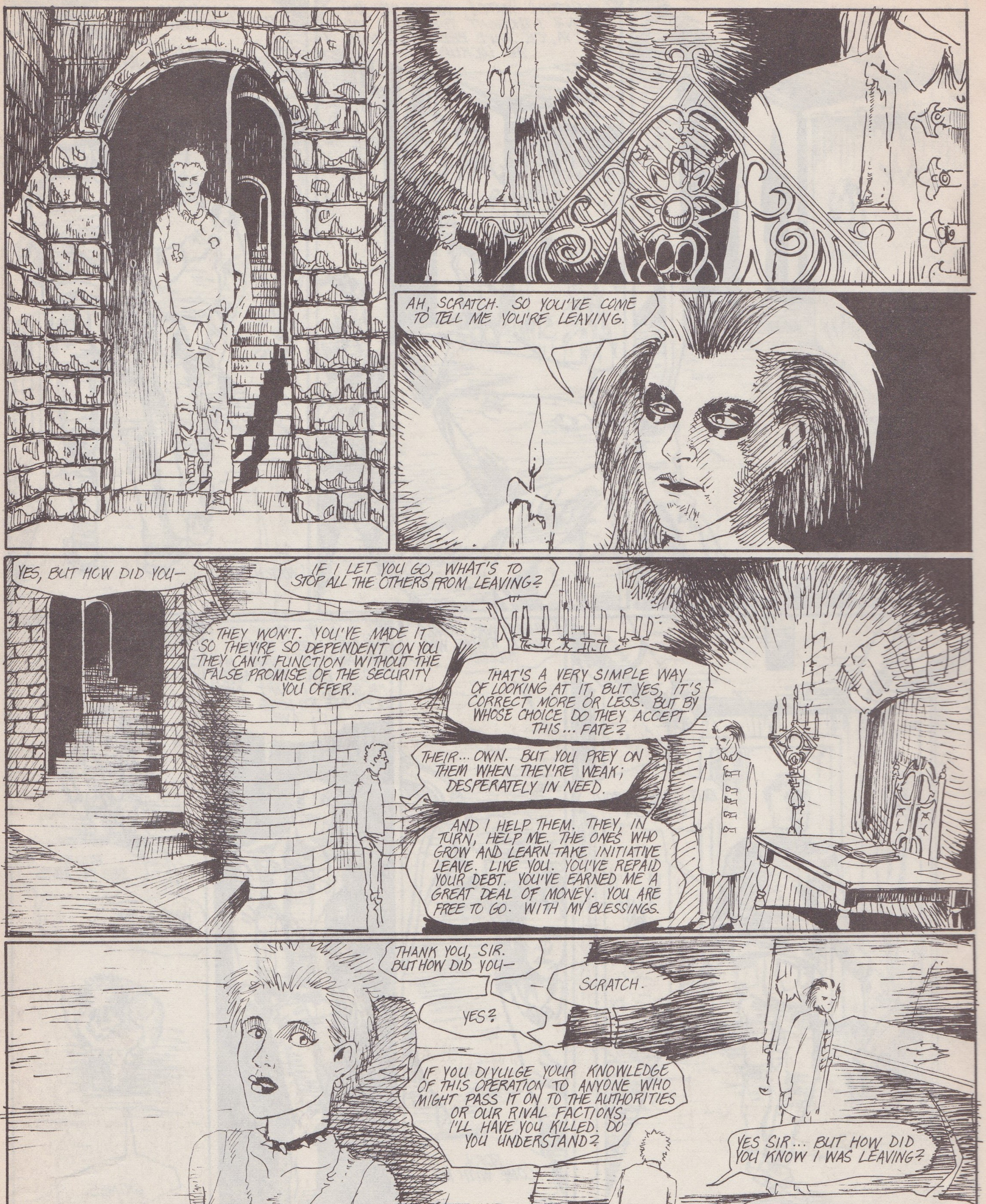

LOOK SCRATCH, YOUR MUMMY CAME FOR YOU.
FUCK... YOU...
IT'S TOO BAD WE DIDN'T KICK YOU IN THE BOLLOCKS. SHE COULD HAVE KISSED 'EM BETTER. HAR HAR HAR.
CAN YOU WALK?
I COULDN'T JUST STAND THERE AND LET THOSE THUGS KICK YOU ABOUT THE ROAD. THEY CALLED YOU SCRATCH...
I'M STEPHANIE.
YES... AND... uh... THANKS.
MY FLAT'S CLOSE BY. I WAS JUST ON ME WAY 'OME FROM WORK. LET'S TAKE YOU BACK THERE AN' CLEAN YOU UP AN' GIVE YOU A SPOT OF TEA.
THAT'D BE LOVELY... THANK YOU.
'ERE WE ARE. GO SIT ON THE COUCH AN' I'LL MAKE SOME TEA.
IT'S HUGE. 'OW DO YOU AFFORD IT?
WELL, MY FATHER'S A DEPUTY MINISTER. 'E'S PAYING FOR IT WHILE I'M TRAINING TO BE A NURSE.
WHEN I'M FINISHED ME TRAINING AN' I'M MAKING MONEY, I WANT TO GO BACK TO SCHOOL...
...PART TIME TO GET MY ENGLISH DEGREE. I REALLY WANT TO WRITE, YOU SEE.

YOU'VE THIS FLAT ALL TO YOURSELF AND YOU'VE DONE A LOT AS WELL. IT MUST BE REALLY... YOU KNOW... GRATIFYING.
OH, IT IS, BUT IT'S A BIT LONELY.
IN THE PAST FEW MONTHS SINCE I MOVED 'ERE I'VE BEEN SO BUSY I 'AVEN'T MADE ANY FRIENDS EXCEPT FOR SOME OF THE GIRLS I WORK WITH.
BUT, I DON'T KNOW ... IT'S NOT THE SAME.
WELL NOW WE'VE GOT YOUR FACE CLEANED UP, LET'S 'AVE A LOOK AT THAT BLOODY PATCH ON YOUR RIBS.
COME ON, DOFF THE SHIRT.
UM... PARDON THE... UH... SMELL... BUT WHERE I LIVE THEY DON'T 'AVE A LOO. I 'AFTA USE THE PUBLIC LAVATORY DOWN THE WAY... AND WELL... I'M ON THE DOLE NOW SO...
DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT. THE PEOPLE WE TREAT AT THE 'OSPITAL AREN'T HALF AS CLEAN SOMETIMES.
IT'S JUST A SMALL CUT WITH A BIG BRUISE. NOTHING SEEMS TO BE BROKEN. IT'S GOING TO BE TENDER FOR AWHILE THOUGH.
OH, THAT'S A GREAT TATOO. WHERE— OH, DEAR. WHERE DID YOU GET THOSE SCARS?
DOING SOME REALLY STUPID THINGS. I'VE LED A SORT OF... AH ...CHEQUERED PAST, IF YOU WILL... IT'S A LONG STORY.
WELL, LET'S 'EAR IT.
WELL, YOU SEE... I DON'T WANT TO SOUND... LIKE... SELF PITYING OR ANYTHING BUT ME MUM DIED WHEN I WAS FIFTEEN AND ME DAD TOOK TO 'EAVY DRINKIN'.
IT GOT SO BAD WHERE 'E'D START PUNCHIN' ME AROUND REAL BAD AN' TELLING ME I WAS NO GOOD. LIKE IT WAS 'COS O' ME THAT ME MUM WAS DEAD. SO... I LEFT.
THERE I WAS, OUT ON THE STREET. NO MONEY, NOWHERE TO GO. THE TYPICAL SOB-STORY. THEN I MET THE PEOPLE FROM "THE UNDERGROUND."
THEY WERE LIKE A NETWORK OF SMALL TIME FOOTPADS AND PICKPOCKETS RUN BY THIS BLOKE GRIMES. THEY TOOK ME IN. HELPED ME WHEN I WAS DOWN AN' OUT.
SO WE'D NICK PURSES AND PICK POCKETS, BREAKIN' AND ENTERIN', SHOPLIFTING, OCCASIONALLY MUGGING SOME CIVIL SERVANT TYPE—OOPS! I FORGOT... YOUR DAD... SORRY. UH... ANYWAYS GRIMES WOULD TAKE A PERCENTAGE AND FENCE THE GOODS WE'D STEAL.

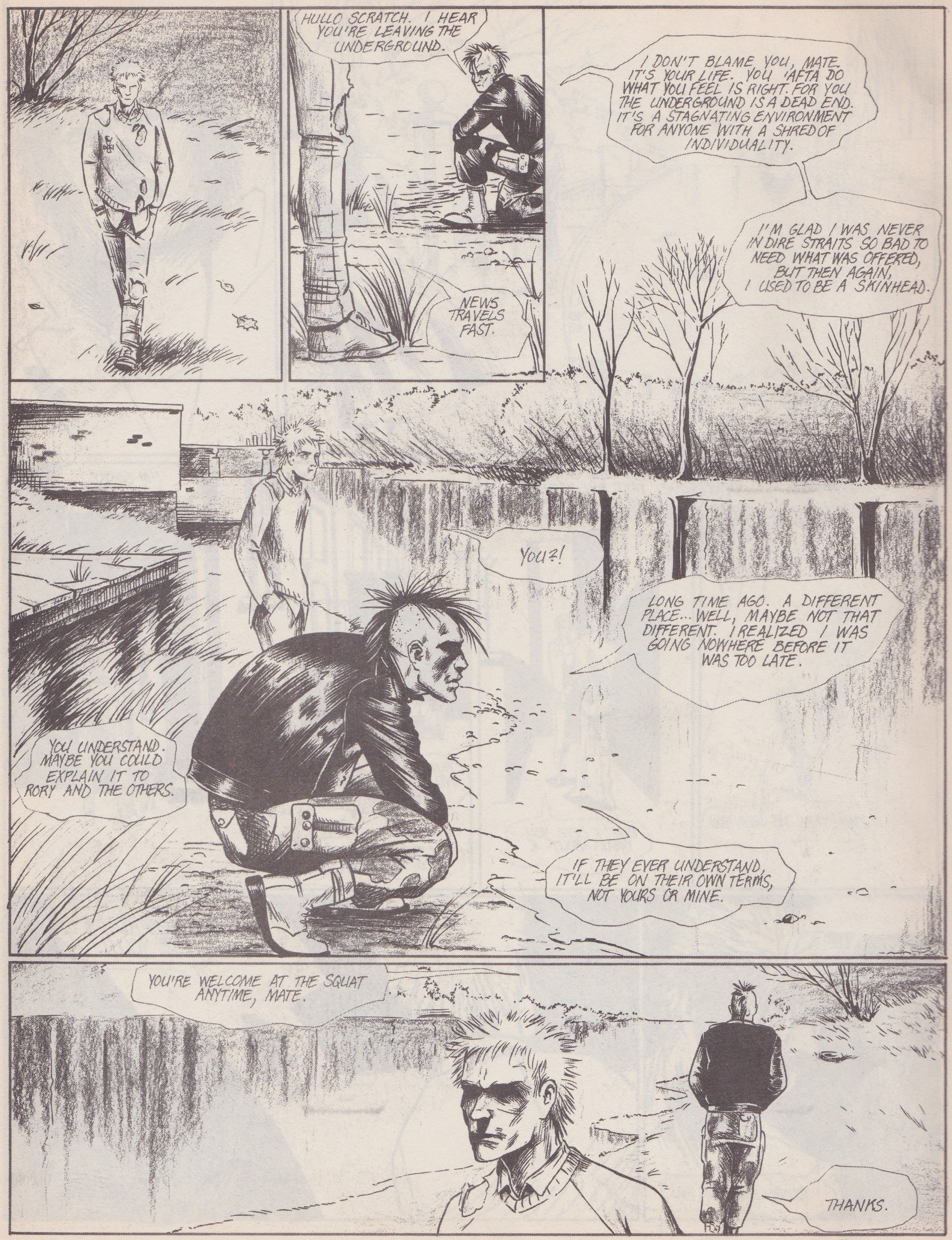

THAT'S WILD! YOU PEOPLE ARE SO ALIVE! SO CLOSE TO THE EDGE!
I KNOW IT SOUNDS STUPID BUT I NOTICED THAT SORT OF AURA ABOUT YOU STRAIGHT AWAY.
WELL, IT'S NOT ALWAYS THAT WONDERFUL. WE'VE HAD A LOT OF RUN-INS WITH THE POLICE AN' THE SKIN'EADS.
ONE OF ME MATES WAS KILLED JUST A WHILE AGO.
HMMMMN.
THIS IS RATHER NICE.
I THOUGHT I'D... ADJUST THE MOOD.
SOUNDS LIKE... OH ... WHATSISNAME... ALBINONI.
THE ADAGIO IN G MINOR I BELIEVE. AHA! THERE IT IS. YOU LIKE IT?
I DON'T KNOW THAT MUCH ABOUT CLASSICAL MUSIC... BUT MOST OF THE STUFF I LIKE IS FROM THE BAROQUE PERIOD.
GREAT. HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT GETTING REAL STONED?
RIGHT AS DODGERS.
MMMM, THIS IS EXCELLENT. AND AS FOR ME FATHER, JUST BECAUSE HE'S IN THE GOVERNMENT DOESN'T MEAN WE SHARE THE SAME VIEWS.
MY MOVING HERE WAS AS MUCH A CONVENIENCE FOR HIM AS FOR ME. I'M OUT OF 'IS HAIR AND 'IS DAUGHTER'S QUESTIONABLE PAST IS OUT OF THE PUBLIC EYE.
YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO APOLOGIZE, BUT IT WAS SWEET OF YOU. MMMM, THIS HAS TURNED INTO A BEAUTIFUL EVENING...


THE NEXT MORNING.
MMMN. WHAT'S WRONG?
NOTHIN'S WRONG. I HAVE TO FIND ME MATES, THEY'RE PROB'LY WONDERIN' WHERE I AM. I CAN'T JUST DISSAPPEAR WITHOUT TELLING ANYONE. I MEAN, I'M IN THEIR DEBT. I OWE 'EM ALOT.
YOU CAN'T SPEND YOUR WHOLE LIFE IN SERVICE TO THEM. FROM WHAT YOU'VE TOLD ME, YOU'VE ALREADY REPAID THIS GRIMES PERSON. IT SEEMS IT WAS AS MUCH FOR THEIR BENEFIT AS YOURS TO TAKE YOU IN.
BUT I THINK THAT YOU USE THEIR EXPECTATIONS AND THIS DEBT AS AN EXCUSE NOT TO THINK FOR YOURSELF.
I... I'M SORRY. I DON'T KNOW WHAT I'M TALKING ABOUT. I'M JUST BEING SELFISH.
I JUST WANTED YOU TO STAY.
NO... YOU'RE ABSOLUTELY RIGHT. IT'S BEEN NAGGING ME FOR THE PAST FEW MONTHS.
AND YOU'VE JUST PUT IT INTO PERSPECTIVE... I... WELL... THANK YOU...
AND I WILL BE BACK. I PROMISE.
I HOPE SO.

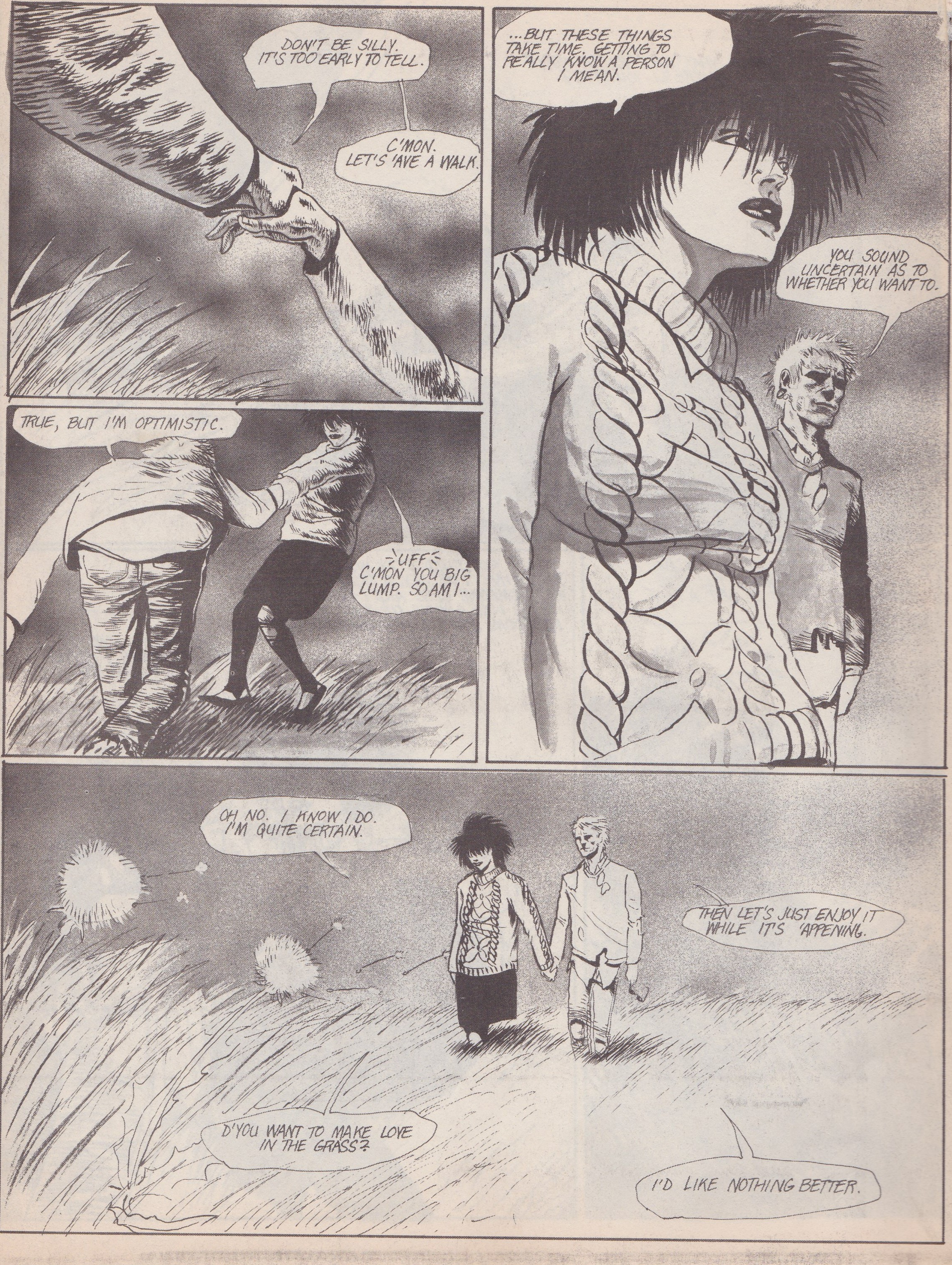

SCRATCH! MATE! WHERE'VE YOU BEEN? I THOUGHT THE SKINS 'AD GOT YA, OR YOU'D BEEN TOSSED IN THE LOCKUP.
I'M LEAVING... THE UNDERGROUND.
WHAT?! YOU CAN'T!
WATCH ME.
BUT... WHAT ABOUT GRIMES?
WHERE WAS GRIMES WHEN TOADIE WAS KILLED?
RORY. COME WITH ME.
I... I CAN'T. THIS IS THE ONLY LIFE I KNOW... THE ONLY LIFE I WANT. MY SOUL IS DOWN 'ERE, MATE. I'M SORRY. I CAN'T. I'VE BEEN 'ERE TOO LONG. IT'S ALL I 'AVE.
RIGHT. SEE YA, MATE.
WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
GRIMES.


AH, SCRATCH. SO YOU'VE COME TO TELL ME YOU'RE LEAVING.
YES, BUT HOW DID YOU—
IF I LET YOU GO, WHAT'S TO STOP ALL THE OTHERS FROM LEAVING?
THEY WON'T. YOU'VE MADE IT SO THEY'RE SO DEPENDENT ON YOU THEY CAN'T FUNCTION WITHOUT THE FALSE PROMISE OF THE SECURITY YOU OFFER.
THAT'S A VERY SIMPLE WAY OF LOOKING AT IT, BUT YES, IT'S CORRECT MORE OR LESS. BUT BY WHOSE CHOICE DO THEY ACCEPT THIS... FATE?
THEIR... OWN. BUT YOU PREY ON THEM WHEN THEY'RE WEAK; DESPERATELY IN NEED.
AND I HELP THEM. THEY, IN TURN, HELP ME. THE ONES WHO GROW AND LEARN TAKE INITIATIVE LEAVE. LIKE YOU. YOU'VE REPAID YOUR DEBT. YOU'VE EARNED ME A GREAT DEAL OF MONEY. YOU ARE FREE TO GO. WITH MY BLESSINGS.
THANK YOU, SIR. BUT HOW DID YOU—
SCRATCH.
YES?
IF YOU DIVULGE YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF THIS OPERATION TO ANYONE WHO MIGHT PASS IT ON TO THE AUTHORITIES OR OUR RIVAL FACTIONS, I'LL HAVE YOU KILLED. DO YOU UNDERSTAND?
YES SIR... BUT HOW DID YOU KNOW I WAS LEAVING?
MY OPERATIVES ARE EVERYWHERE. NOW GO. AND DON'T TRY TO RETURN.

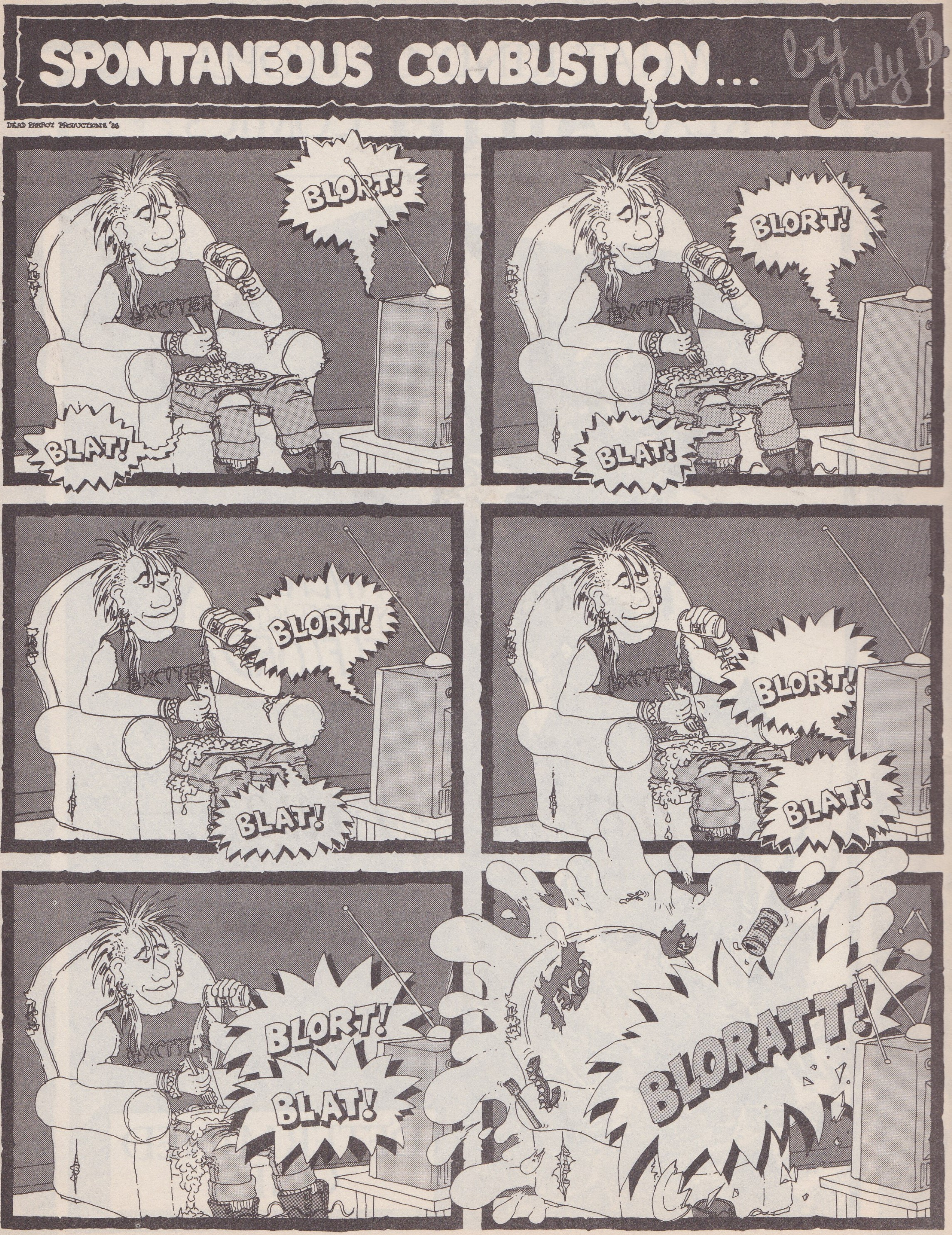
PLEASE SCRATCH, DON'T GO.
I HAVE TO.
THEN TAKE ME WITH YOU.
IT'S NOT LIKE THAT. I CAN'T TAKE YOU WITH ME. IT'S SOMETHING YOU HAVE TO DO FOR YOURSELF.
BUT I LOVE YOU. WHAT ABOUT...?
I'M SORRY. I DIDN'T—
BUT YOU DID ANYWAY AND NOW I'M PREGNANT BECAUSE OF IT.
OH... NO...
OH YES, I'VE SEEN A DOCTOR ABOUT IT...
I'M SO SORRY... I...
YOU'RE SORRY?! YOU..!
I HATE YOU! YOU BASTARD!! I HATE YOU!!


HULLO SCRATCH. I HEAR YOU'RE LEAVING THE UNDERGROUND.
NEWS TRAVELS FAST.
I DON'T BLAME YOU, MATE. IT'S YOUR LIFE. YOU 'AFTA DO WHAT YOU FEEL IS RIGHT. FOR YOU THE UNDERGROUND IS A DEAD END. IT'S A STAGNATING ENVIRONMENT FOR ANYONE WITH A SHRED OF INDIVIDUALITY.
I'M GLAD I WAS NEVER IN DIRE STRAITS SO BAD TO NEED WHAT WAS OFFERED, BUT THEN AGAIN, I USED TO BE A SKINHEAD.
YOU?!
LONG TIME AGO. A DIFFERENT PLACE... WELL, MAYBE NOT THAT DIFFERENT. I REALIZED I WAS GOING NOWHERE BEFORE IT WAS TOO LATE.
YOU UNDERSTAND. MAYBE YOU COULD EXPLAIN IT TO RORY AND THE OTHERS.
IF THEY EVER UNDERSTAND, IT'LL BE ON THEIR OWN TERMS, NOT YOURS OR MINE.
YOU'RE WELCOME AT THE SQUAT ANYTIME, MATE.
THANKS.

SO WHAT WILL YOU DO NOW? WHERE'LL YOU STAY?
I S'POSE I'LL TRY AN' GET A JOB. LIVE IN ME BASEMENT 'TILL I'VE SAVED ENOUGH MONEY TA GET A FLAT.
WELL, YOU COULD STAY WITH ME IF YOU'D LIKE. I'VE NEVER TRIED LIVING WITH SOMEONE ELSE AND I DON'T KNOW IF I'D LIKE GIVING UP THAT MUCH FREEDOM. BUT, YOU'RE VERY SPECIAL, SCRATCH.
THANKS, I'D LOVE TO. AND YOU KNOW, I REALLY THINK I LOVE YOU.


DON'T BE SILLY. IT'S TOO EARLY TO TELL.
C'MON. LET'S 'AVE A WALK.
...BUT THESE THINGS TAKE TIME. GETTING TO REALLY KNOW A PERSON I MEAN.
TRUE, BUT I'M OPTIMISTIC.
UFF C'MON YOU BIG LUMP. SO AM I...
YOU SOUND UNCERTAIN AS TO WHETHER YOU WANT TO.
OH NO. I KNOW I DO. I'M QUITE CERTAIN.
THEN LET'S JUST ENJOY IT WHILE IT'S 'APPENING.
D'YOU WANT TO MAKE LOVE IN THE GRASS?
I'D LIKE NOTHING BETTER.

WHAT KIND OF PEOPLE
READ Aircel COMICS?
WHERE'S MY LATEST ISSUE OF ELFLORD?!
DETERMINED ONES.


SPONTANEOUS COMBUSTION... by Andy B.
DEAD PARROT PRODUCTIONS '86
BLORT!
BLAT!
BLORT!
BLAT!
BLORT!
BLAT!
BLORT!
BLAT!
BLORT!
BLAT!
BLORATT!

AIRCEL

PRESENTS

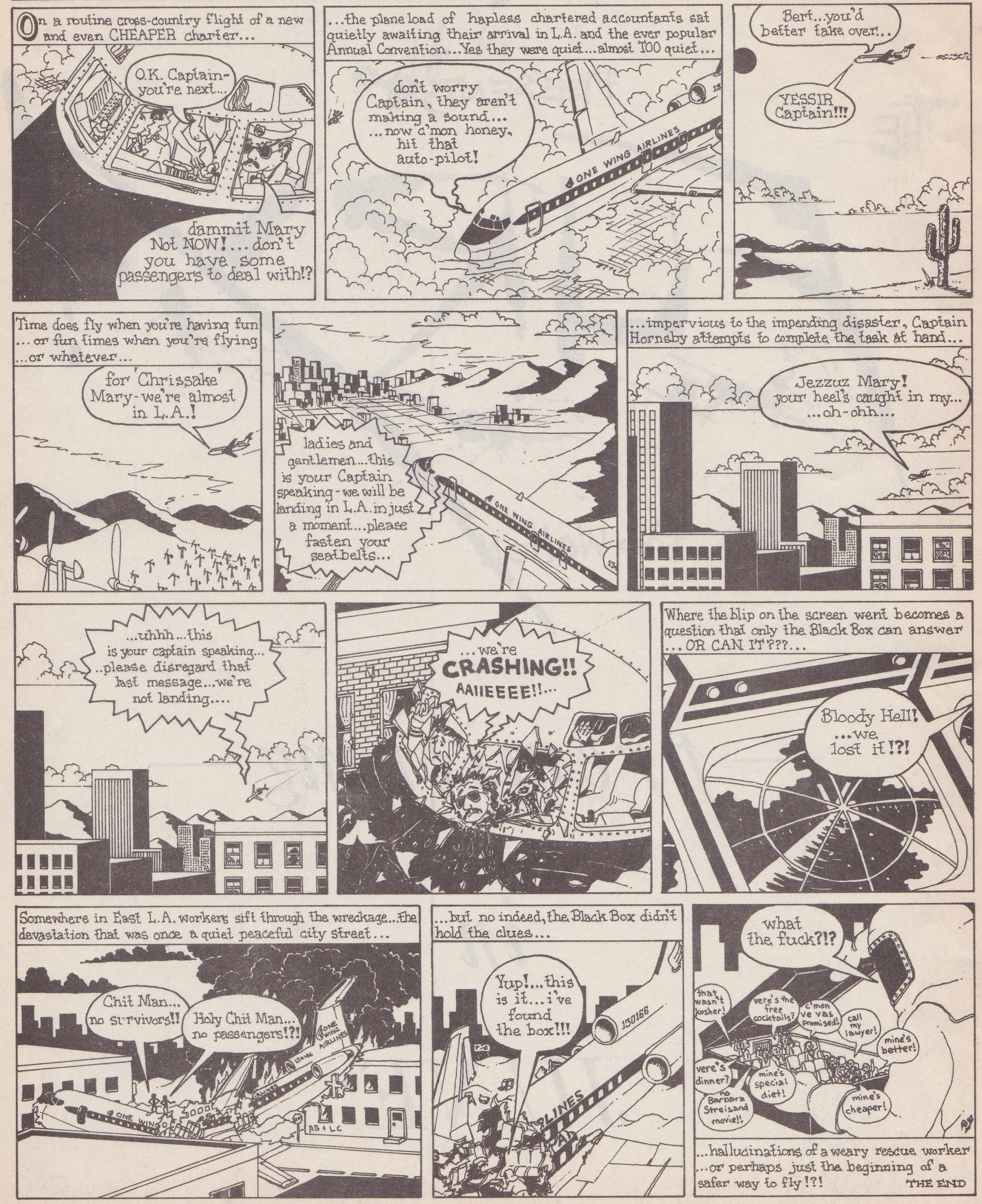
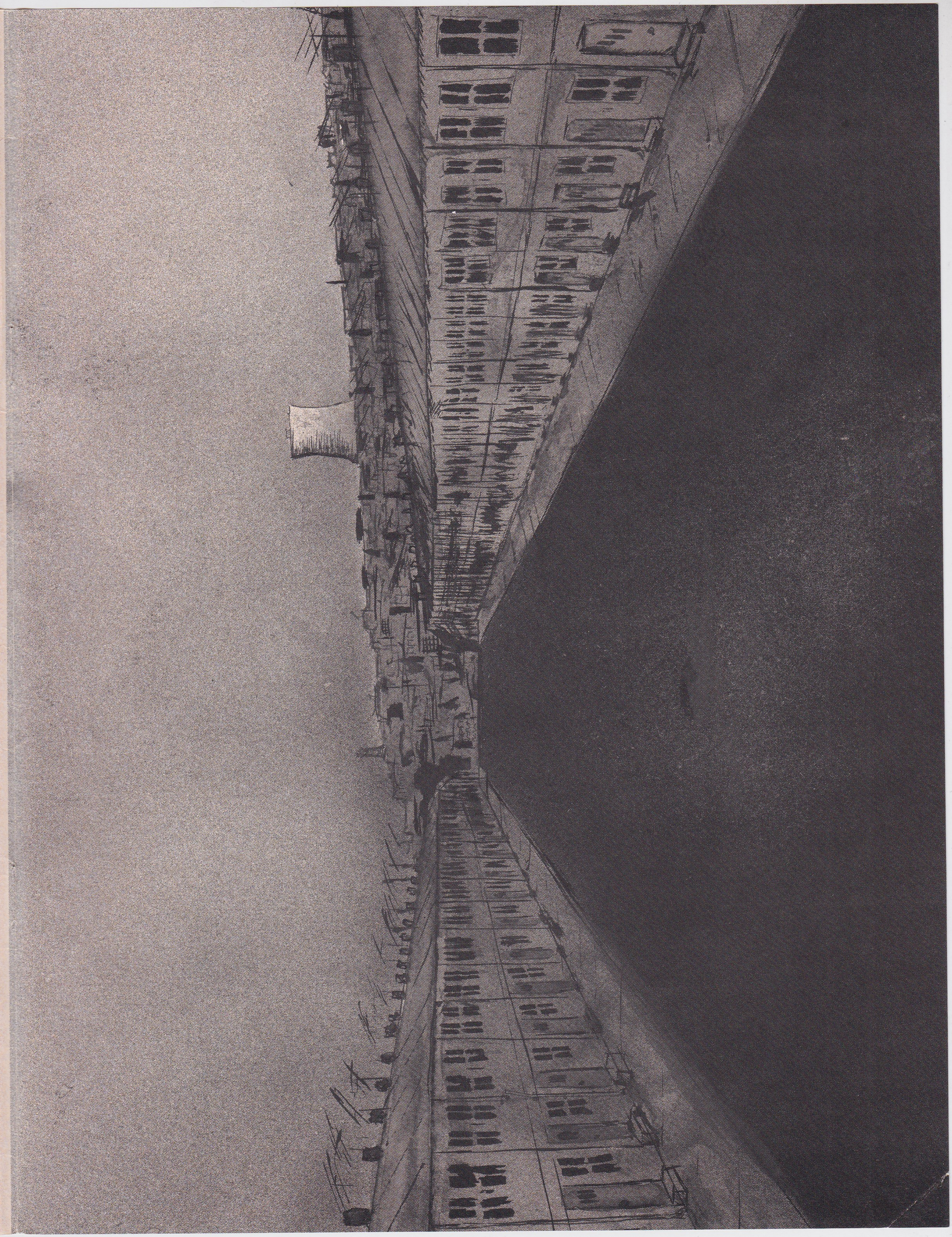
THE FURY!

BY Rob Walton

— premiering —

in

JUNE

THE BLACK BOX

by: Andy B.
DEAD PARROT PRODUCTIONS '87